

Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Published by the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, Division of
Christian Life and Work, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.
297 Fourth Avenue New York 10, N. Y.

Bi-monthly, \$2.00 for two years

VOLUME 22

MARCH-APRIL, 1951

NUMBER 2

"AMERICA! AMERICA! GOD SHED HIS GRACE ON THEE."

Katherine Lee Bates, 1893

"THE WORTH OF PERSONS"

CHINESE — The United States has revised its immigration regulations to allow Chinese students to remain in this country indefinitely and work rather than return to Communist China, it was disclosed today. The new regulations were spelled out in "The Federal Register" yesterday. They decree that any Chinese citizen who came to the United States under the educational and training program authorized by the China aid act of 1950, can get a job here by simply obtaining approval of immigration officials. If he still wants to remain in the United States after completing his student program, he likewise may do so by getting approval from immigration authorities. . . . (New York Herald-Tribune, April 15).

On the subject of Chinese students in this country, James Reston, columnist in *The New York Times* of March 9, wrote:

"There are about 3,600 of these students here now, most of them doing graduate work at their own expense in the large state universities. They received temporary permits to remain in the United States, but to do so they had to stay in school, keep their academic work in good order, pay their bills, and go home when their courses ended. The Chinese civil war and the Chinese Communist aggression in Korea, however, have created a number of problems. First, most of the students were cut off from monthly remittances (from parents) . . . Second, the Communist conquest of the Chinese mainland changed most of the students' plans about returning home. And now many of them are reaching the end of their student courses. . . ."

In an overall view of this Nation's attitude toward Chinese resident in our country, the General Board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, at its meet-

ing on March 28, adopted a resolution drawn up by its Departments of Racial and Cultural Relations, International Justice and Goodwill, and its Division of Foreign Missions and Division of Home Missions. In full the resolution states:

WHEREAS the opposition of Chinese Communist military forces to the action of the United Nations in Korea has resulted in a state of tension in the United States; and

WHEREAS this tension has been reflected in some quarters by acts and attitudes of hostility toward persons of Chinese birth or ancestry who are permanently resident in the United States and whose loyalty to this Nation is unquestioned; and

WHEREAS the heritage of the Nation rests on the principles that all community relationships, both personal and group, should be guided by the worth of persons and that individual rights and responsibilities should operate under proper legal safeguards rather than upon the basis of the present governmental regime of the country of a person's origin or ancestry; therefore be it

RESOLVED That the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA urges the churches and Christians to take the responsibility for developing attitudes and actions which will strengthen the bonds of Christian goodwill in these difficult times by treating all people irrespective of national origin or race as beings of worth because they are children of God; and be it further

RESOLVED That the Council urges public officials as well as citizens' and community groups to take appropriate action to guarantee the safety of persons of Chinese birth or ancestry who are resident in the United States and the protection of their property; to express the goodwill of the community toward them and to make real the American principle that wholesome community life is developed by the full participation of peoples from many different races and national origins.

The matter in these pages is presented for the reader's information. It is not to be construed as reflecting the attitudes of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations or of The National Council of Churches.

NAVAJO SCHOOL — As the first step in a long-range educational program promising an eventual solution to one cause of the much debated Navajo problem (*Interracial News Service*, March-April, 1949; March-April 1950), 1,288 tribal youngsters are currently achieving literacy at the Federal Government's year-old Intermountain Indian School (Utah) on a 1,000-acre campus nearly 500 miles from their squalid reservation homes. Enjoying a swimming pool, dormitories, dining rooms, shops and classroom facilities equal in many respects to those found at expensive private schools, Navajo boys and girls are receiving a firm grounding in English, arithmetic, trade subjects, home economics, hygiene and other basic needs. The situation is in sharp contrast to past neglect, as a result of which World War II tests found young Navajo tribesmen to be almost 100 per cent illiterate, despite a treaty signed in 1868 promising adequate schooling for the tribe's children.

In the belief of Dr. George A. Boyce, Intermountain superintendent, graduates of the new school will be able to compete in the labor market for jobs never previously open to Navajos, enabling many members of the new generation to leave a sprawling reservation where 65,000 tribesmen now live at a meager subsistence level. . . . However, he pointed out that fully 14,000 of the tribe's 25,000 children of school age still lack educational facilities. An additional 8,000 Navajo youngsters are receiving only the rudiments of formal schooling in rickety reservation structures, mission institutions, and small off-reservation schools scattered through a half-dozen Western States. White school boards in communities on the fringes of reservations continue to bar Navajos from state-supported schools as the children of Federal wards who pay no state taxes. (New York Times, March 3).

INDIAN HEALTH — Dr. Haven Emerson, honorary president of the Association on American Indian Affairs, de-

clared that the spread of death and disease among the original Americans was due to "political parsimony and bureaucratic neglect." Speaking to friends of the Association in New York, Dr. Emerson said that 40 percent of the Indian hospital cases involved preventable or controllable diseases. "These conditions exist," he said, "because long-standing Indian needs for medical care and public health protection are deferred by Federal budget makers year after year. Informed authorities know that appropriations must be increased immediately by \$12.50 per capita of our 400,000 Indians to meet these needs. Yet, next year's budget now pending provides a per capita increase of only \$2.67." . . . Death from tuberculosis in Alaska, Dr. Emerson said, is fourteen times that for the United States generally and one of the highest rates in the world. Among the Navajos the disease kills at almost ten times the general rate, and in Montana tuberculosis kills Indians nine times as often as other Montanans. Dr. Emerson's statistics also showed that Indian infant mortality is almost quadruple that of other babies, and that pneumonia kills Indians nearly three times as often as it kills other Americans. . . . (New York Times, March 7).

* * *

MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS — Gladwin Hill, columnist, in a series of articles in the *New York Times*, has dealt with the economic and sociological problem of the "wetbacks," illegal Mexican immigrants in the Southwestern United States. In his opening article of March 25 he states:

"A visitor to the Southwest today has to make a double mental adjustment to comprehend the conditions he finds. First, he has to think back twenty years to prohibition days when wholesale violation of the laws of the United States was being ignored, tacitly sanctioned or overtly encouraged by a large cross-section of the population. Second, he has to project himself in imagination back a full century to the days of slavery, when the systematic exploitation of an underprivileged class of humanity as cheap labor was an accepted part of the American social and economic order. Then the observer has to compound mentally these two diverse anomalies and conceive of their existence in 1951.

"For that, in effect, is the situation today in the Southwest, and in parts of the deep South and the Far West as well, arising from the ceaseless and steadily increasing tide of illegal immigration from Mexico into the United States. This illegal immigration now amounts to more than 1,000,000 individuals a year. They sneak across the thinly patrolled 1,600-mile border between Brownsville, Texas, and San Diego, California, in an unending hegira from Mexican unemployment and wage levels as low as 40 cents a day, seeking farm work and any other labor available in this country

"Some 500,000 of these 'wetbacks' — so-called because of those who swim the Rio Grande, the Texas-Mexico boundary — were caught by U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Services Border Patrol last year and put back across the international line.

. . . "The 'wetback' situation is of particular pertinence at this time. The defense emergency has evoked official proposals for the importation of hundreds of thousands of workers from outside the continental United States. Before Congress is a draft extension of the 1949 agreement between the United States and Mexico, which expires in June, governing the so-called 'importation' of Mexican farm workers under contracts, which in actuality have degenerated into the legalization of 'wetbacks.' Before President Truman is the initial report of the special lay commission he appointed last summer to investigate the problems of migrant farm labor and the 'wetback' evil. Also, it has lately been realized that the 'wetback' traffic offers a wide-open avenue for Communist spies to enter the country. There is no public record of any having been caught lately. But immigration officers acknowledge that every year at least a handful of Europeans, some of them with Communist backgrounds, are netted among the 'wetbacks' . . .

. . . "The main centers of 'wetback' labor are the large-scale cotton, citrus and vegetable ranching areas of Arizona, and the Imperial and San Joaquin Valleys of California. . . . Employment of 'wetbacks,' although from a realistic standpoint tantamount to harboring a fugitive, has been held by the Federal courts to be not a punishable offense because of the omission in the 1917 version of the immigration laws of any specific penalty." . . .

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Representative Emanuel Celler, Democrat of New York, announced on March 26 that he would move for an investigation of illicit labor migrations across the Mexican border. "It may be that the Immigration Service needs more agents at the border to stop this traffic," Mr. Celler said. "I would imagine that the states involved would show vital interest and endeavor to curb this trek . . . In any investigation that I will inaugurate I will ask the governors of the states concerned to show some semblance of interest, but in any event these entrenched ranchers, cattle and cotton interests in those states must be made to realize that there is more to the economy of the nation than their own pocketbooks . . . Payment of fifteen cents an hour is a violation of the Minimum Wage Act. Conniving to bring 'wetbacks' across the border is a violation of the immigration laws. Forcing these unfortunate aliens to live in feudal slavery is a violation of our civil rights statutes, aside from the fact that it violates every sense of decency and honor." (New York Times, March 27).

* * *

PUERTO RICAN LABOR — Labor Commissioner Fernando Sierraberdecia told an agricultural subcommittee of the House of Representatives on March 26 that Puerto Rico could furnish from 50,000 to 100,000 experienced agricultural workers to the United States for July-to-December work. The commissioner was one of six witnesses at hearings on use of Puerto Rican labor in the contin-

ental United States to help relieve seasonal farm labor shortages . . . Mr. Sierraberdecia said more than 10,000 laborers had been hired by United States farmers last year, of whom 98 per cent had returned after the work was finished.

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PENDULUM SWINGING

CIVIL RIGHTS IN 1950 — In a joint report by the American Jewish Congress and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, sharp criticism was made of both houses of Congress for failure to take action to eliminate "those patterns of discrimination and segregation which deny to many Americans that equality of opportunity and right which is the essence of our democratic system." The report, just made public, entitled "Civil Rights in the United States in 1950: A Balance Sheet of Group Relations" . . . accused the 81st Congress of making a "political football" of the civil rights issue.

"The Eighty-first Congress," says the report, "which came to office in an election generally regarded as a clear-cut victory for the civil rights program, belied the promises of both the Democratic and Republican 1948 platforms by failing to enact any major civil rights measure." It is maintained that only a few Senators and Representatives manifested any regard for civil liberties or inter-group relations and their connection with the position of the United States in international affairs. The report asserted that no substantial action had been taken by the 81st Congress on the poll tax or anti-lynching bills, the prohibition of segregation in the armed forces, or any bills for self-government or equality in the District of Columbia. . . (summarized from the *New York Times*, March 26).

* *

HOUSING — A report on segregation in housing in ten widely separated American cities was made public on April 14 by the Committee on Discrimination in Housing and the Public Affairs Committee. The report asserts that while progress has been made in doing away with segregation, racial and national minority groups are still discriminated against in both Northern and Southern cities . . . "Many northern cities enforce segregation more rigorously than the South does. The nation's largest ghettos, for example, are not in New Orleans or Atlanta, but in Chicago and New York."

In New York City, where the City Housing Authority is credited with good interracial policy, the report notes that progress is being made. In contrast, Chicago and Detroit are said to be virtual

"powder kegs," where city administrations are acting to keep most minorities in segregated slum areas. Other cities covered by the report are Los Angeles, Denver, Springfield, Ill.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Charlottesville, Va.; Sledge, Miss., and Waterbury, Conn. The last community, Denver and Los Angeles were said to be making progress in overcoming discrimination. (*New York Herald-Tribune*, April 15).

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company won a minor victory in its fight to keep Jim Crow in its New York City Peter Cooper Village and Stuyvesant Town housing projects last week, but took a real beating the following day when Mayor Impellitteri signed the powerful Brown-Isaacs bill. Sponsored by Councilmen Earl Brown and Stanley Isaacs, the bill calls for a \$500 fine if officials of city aided private housing projects discriminate against tenants because of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry. Aimed directly at the Metropolitan's Stuyvesant Town, the bill also gives a complainant the right to appeal to the Supreme Court to keep the housing project from practices of the massive insurance company in evicting him. The fight against the discriminatory company is seven years old (*Interracial News Service* July 1943; Fall, 1948; Sept.-Oct. 1950), and out of this fight grew the minor victory which Metropolitan won last week. Thirty-one white tenants of Stuyvesant Town joined the fight to break racial barriers in the project. They did cause a token number of Negroes to be admitted. In return, the company ordered the eviction of these 31 tenants. Their appeal to the courts bore no fruit because Municipal Judge George L. Genung ruled last week that Metropolitan was acting within its rights to evict them without giving any reasons. The tenants' attorney, Paul O'Dwyer, brother of the former New York mayor, in announcing that he would appeal Judge Genung's ruling, said: "It is a sad commentary that the courts can be utilized in such a fashion to seal the lips of those who protest against discrimination." (*Chicago Defender* March 24.)

* *

ARMED SERVICES LEGISLATION— Officially commending the Department of Defense in its recently adopted policy of equality, the General Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA took the following action at its meeting on January 17:

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has adopted a policy of equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin, in accordance with the recom-

mendations of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the National Council of Churches commend the Department of Defense for the adoption of this policy; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Council urge that the implementation of this policy be immediately expanded and strengthened.

In another resolution at the same meeting, the General Board of the National Council of Churches voted:

WHEREAS, the Nation is considering new legislation for both military training and military service; and

WHEREAS, such legislation may affect the occupational status and location of men, women and families of all races, creeds and national origins within the Nation . . . therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA urge that any legislation for military training and military service shall contain provisions which will protect all men and women from segregation and discrimination based on race, creed or national origin in the procurement, processing, training and utilization of manpower for the armed services.

. . . "To set back the clock on racial integration in the military forces, the House Armed Services Committee in a hush-hush closed door session inserted a provision in the draft bill which would put segregation on a permanent basis in all branches of the armed forces where it has been practically abolished. By a vote of 20-11, the Committee wrote into the draft bill a provision offered by Rep. Arthur Winstead (Democrat, Mississippi) to give white draftees the privilege of requesting service in racially-segregated units, both in universal military training and in training and service in the armed forces . . ." (Venice T. Spraggs, in *The Chicago Defender* March 24.)

A stirring plea by a Negro Representative against segregation in the armed services moved even some Southern Democrats to applaud in the House on April 11. Representative William L. Dawson, Democrat of Illinois, one of two Negro House members, implored his colleagues to reject a segregation provision in a pending draft bill.

"How long, how long, my conferees and gentlemen from the South, will you divide us Americans on account of color?" the Georgia-born Negro demanded. "Why will this body go on record to brand this section of citizens second class? Give me the test that you would apply to make any one a full-fledged American and by the living God, if it means death itself, I will pay it—but give it to me," Mr. Dawson told a hushed House . . . "I say to you who claim to love America in this hour of its stress that the greatest

argument the Soviet Union is using among the black peoples of the world to turn them against us is your treatment of me, me an American citizen. I believe the South is big enough for all of us to live together in peace and happiness if we can but have understanding. But we cannot have understanding if you raise one against the other because of color."

The House, including some Southern Democrats, applauded as Mr. Dawson took his seat. The House later threw out the segregation provision 178 to 126. (*New York Times* April 13).

* *

NATIONAL NEGRO HEALTH WEEK — Federal Security Administrator Oscar R. Ewing announced during February the termination of the National Negro Health Week movement . . . Since 1932, this educational project has been sponsored and directed by the Public Health Service. Co-sponsors have been Tuskegee Institute, Howard University, the National Medical Association, and the National Negro Insurance Association. Mr. Ewing said that the termination of a special program for Negro health is "in keeping with the trend toward integration of all programs for the advancement of the people in the fundamentals of health, education, and welfare." Consultative services to Negro groups in their communities, and clearing-house services for information on state and community health programs will continue through the Division of Public Health Education, Washington, D. C. (*Kansas City Call*, February 23).

* * *

OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

English Churches and the Color Problem

A conference under the auspices of the British Council of Churches was held in Liverpool last week to consider the responsibilities of the Christian Churches to the growing number of colored workers in Britain. Representatives were present from churches and missions, government departments, universities and voluntary societies.

The conference recommended that expert advice be taken with a view to legal action to remedy the situation when colored people are refused lodgings, when rents are raised to exploit them or when leases of property discriminate against them.

As to employment, the conference said that while some firms will employ colored workers, others (even some public utilities) refuse, and so defeat the efforts of

friendly government officials to find them jobs.

Dr. Kenneth Little, head of the Social Anthropology department of Edinburgh University, stressed the need for broad social and economic changes to attack the problem at its roots. Higher standards of life in the colonies, he said, would make for greater equality. Mr. A. H. Richmond of the Social Science Department of Liverpool University said it was the duty of the churches to combat color prejudice and discrimination in all its forms with all possible weapons, sacred and secular.

The conference agreed that local Councils of Churches should be asked to plan joint action. The British Council of Churches will convene a second conference in 1952.

Spokesmen for the churches said that colored people who have been brought up as Christians in their home country ought to join in fellowship with Christians in British Churches . . . The conference went on record as believing that the right policy is not segregation but assimilation of colored people in Britain without any bar or discrimination. (release, *Ecumenical Press Service*, April 11).

* *

New Japan

"MacArthur directives to the Japanese government over a period of five and a half years changed the entire political, economic and social structure of the country, affected the lives of the most humble farmers and shopkeepers," writes Ralph Chapman in the *New York Herald-Tribune* of April 15 . . . "Most observers believe that the reforms in the political and social fields will probably stick, since these are in accord with the natural longings of people everywhere. . . It is highly unlikely, for instance, that the Japanese will ever give up such newly acquired rights as those of assembly and free speech . . . Complete separation of Church and State is likely to continue also, but in this case Gen. MacArthur's order to that end meant a return to former times rather than anything new. Establishment of 'State Shinto' under government control was a device of the military to add force to its thought-control program. Most church-going Japanese prefer to keep their religion a thing apart.

"Most spectacular result of the occupation was the clause in the new constitution renouncing war as a sovereign right. This did not come about as a result of any written directive from General Headquarters, but it was certainly the result of heavy pressure from that

quarter. Peculiarly enough, when Gen. MacArthur indicated recently that it might be well to backtrack on this, there was great opposition among the Japanese themselves to the idea of rearming.

"But the single change that has cut deepest into Japanese life and is most likely to endure was the granting of equal rights to women. Enjoying their new freedom to the full, Japanese women have carried it right into their home lives, and there are many jokes on this score. Nevertheless, all of the younger women, and many men, will fight fiercely against any effort to abrogate these rights. On the other hand, the much-discussed land reform seems to this writer at least to depend largely upon the future economic development of the country. If the new small farmers are able to make a living on the plots of land allotted the problem of absentee ownership will not arise. If the small owners are forced to go into debt, land reform is sure to fail.

"The breakup of the zaibatsu, the great industrial monopolies, has been widely hailed, but here too there would seem to be some question whether modern industry does not tend to centralization by its very nature and regardless of legislation in opposition.

"Gen. MacArthur and his staff imposed democracy on Japan by hypodermic. It is still too early to say whether the whole inoculation will 'take.'"

* * *

FORTHCOMING INSTITUTES

Institutes on Racial and Cultural Relations will be held for the third consecutive summer. The Institutes are sponsored by the Interdenominational Committee on Racial and Cultural Relations, the chair-

man of which is J. Oscar Lee, Executive Director of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations of the National Council of Churches.

The Institutes will be held at Lincoln University, Pa., July 23-27; Eden Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo., August 6-10; and Menucha Conference Grounds, Corbett, Oregon (near Portland), August 20-24. These Institutes serve the practical needs of the Protestant churches in the training of leadership, that will enable them to become inclusive in their membership, ministering to all the people in a given area. Through worship, panel discussions, case studies, visual aids, group study, etc., and dynamic leadership, knowledge is gained in techniques and methods which can be used in local communities for developing inclusive churches.

The Deans of the Institutes are Wm. H. McConaghy, Minister, First Presbyterian Church, Syracuse, N. Y.; Galen R. Weaver, Race Relations Department, American Missionary Association, Congregational Christian Churches; and Miss Thelma Stevens, Christian Social Relations, Woman's Division of Christian Service of The Methodist Church.

Enrollment in the Institutes will be limited. A basic knowledge of racial and cultural relations is essential. Members of local churches, church councils, administrators of church related institutions, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., and similar groups are desired.

Further details as to cost of attendance, etc., will be sent upon request. Write to J. Oscar Lee, Room 53, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., advisor on the Institutes.

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